

Call for tender

Desk Study on criteria for extending the group certification concept to groups other than smallholders

Background

IFOAM has been instrumental in developing the criteria that are now the basis for the certification of smallholder producer groups. In 2003, IFOAM took the position that “there may be a number of other situations where group certification concepts may be relevant and applicable, and we would like in a nearby future also to have a dialogue on these issues” (IFOAM position on smallholder group certification). Since then, discussions within IFOAM have often pointed at the need to consider extending the group certification concept to operators other than smallholders, considering the credibility of the approach and also the current and desired scale of development of Organic Agriculture.

Alongside the process to review and update the 2002 NOSB recommendation on group certification, the US organic sector recently got very divided on the same issue of whether or not the group certification should be extended to include multi-site certification for handlers. This discussion somehow rubbed off on the IFOAM 2008 GA motion process, with passionate argumentations during the Motion Bazaar, resulting in a motion, passed by the GA, stating: “IFOAM, and the World Board, will support, educate and advocate regarding Grower Group certification in order to obtain recognized and legal status world wide for small holders, family scale farmers and others small scale processors/ handlers. **If or when other groups are considered for an ICS system, additional criteria will have to be proposed, discussed and agreed upon by the membership**”. Meanwhile, the CACC (Certification, Accreditation and Compliance Committee of the US National Organic Standard Board) finally decided to limit their November 2008 recommendation to smallholders, but included in their work plan for the year 2009 to develop criteria for the multi-site certification of handlers.

IFOAM therefore intends to start working on the development of additional criteria, both to address the position and GA motion and to be in position to comment on the upcoming work of the CACC when this will be posted for public comments. The process to do this will begin with a desk study that will review existing criteria for handlers’ group certification in various certification schemes and identify relevant issues to be considered by the IFOAM Criteria Committee who is intended to meet on this issue in 2009.

Objective

Carry out a desk study on criteria for extending the group certification concept to groups other than smallholders.

Scope and desired output of the study

The study should:

- Identify existing systems for the collective or multi-site certification of various categories of handlers (large producers or production companies, processors, traders, retailers, restaurants, canteens, etc) in the organic sector and in other certification schemes (e.g. among ISEAL members, ISO standards and guidelines, etc), and make a synthetic analysis of their criteria and experiences (extent to which they are used, results, discussions around their future development, etc).
- Research and analyze opinions and positions of a representative sample of various market players on the issue (certification bodies, government authorities, national organic movements, industry, accreditation bodies, etc).
- Make a first proposal of possible categories of operators certifiable as groups and the corresponding criteria to be reviewed by the Criteria Committee and identify issues specific to the organic sector to be particularly considered by the Criteria Committee alongside this proposal.

Tasks of the Consultant and conditions

1. Collect information and inform IFOAM of the information collected not later than the 28th of February 2009.
2. Seek feedback and approval from IFOAM on the kind and amount of information collected.
3. Submit a first draft of the report to IFOAM not later than the 15th of March.
4. Integrate IFOAM's comments and deliver the final report not later than the 31st of March.

IFOAM would welcome the application from a team of 2 consultants. Familiarity with the topic and the work of the IFOAM Criteria Committee is essential. The total costs of this work shall not exceed 4.000€.

Submission of Offer

Date of submission of offer

Your offer shall be received by IFOAM's Head Office no later than the 28th of January 2009 and submitted by e-mail to Joelle Katto-Andrighetto (j.katto@ifoam.org).



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS

Indicate the following on the subject line: “Tender: criteria for extending the group certification concept”.

Your submission shall include:

- A description of how you will carry out the assignment.
- An explanation why you are qualified for this assignment, and in particular your experiences regarding the topic or other relevant experiences
- Any other relevant references
- A company profile and/or personal CV(s) as appropriate.
- Any relevant reflections on the assignment

Schedule for decision

IFOAM intends to select the consultant or consultant team by the 30th of January. Should IFOAM’s decision be delayed so as to affect the timeline in this Terms of Reference, a new time schedule will be negotiated with the consultant or consultant team that was selected for the project.